GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5165
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2008
COAL DEPOSIT IN ABANDONED COAL MINES
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Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether several coal mines in the country have been abandoned ;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor ;

(c) the estimated quantum of coal deposits available in such abandoned coal mines ;

(d) whether the Government has any plan to exploit the deposits of Coal from these abandoned mines ;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government proposes to collaborate with foreign companies to exploit the coal deposits ; and

g) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SAN TOSH BAGRODIA)

(a) to (c): Yes, Sir.As per the study conducted by the Central Mining Planning and Design Institute Limited(CMPDIL) in respect of Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECU, Bharat Coking Coal Limited(BCCL) and Central Coalfields Limited(CCL), it is found that 55 mines/units in these subsidiaries of Coal India Limited(CIL) have been abandoned either due to techno-economical or safety reasons. 9 other mines/units have been abandoned in Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) and South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SHCL) due to exhaustion of exlractablc reserves, safety or techno-economic ground, poor grade of coal, heavy water seepage and drowning of mine.

As reported by CIL, it is very difficult to ascertain coal reserves in such abandoned coal mines in the absence of proper geological report and non-availability of abandoned mines plans. However, subsuduary-wise indicative left out reserves in those abandoned mines/units, is given as below :~

(In Million Tonnes)

Name of the Company	No. of Mines	Left out reserves
Eastern Coalfields Limited	17	280.24
Bharat Coking Coal Limited	22	668.18
Central Coalfields Limited	16	482.70
Western Coalfields Limited	4	82.18
South Eastern Coalfields Limited	5	17.21

Total 1530.51

In M/s. Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL), 44 mines have been closed and 650 million tonnes of coal have been estimated to be present in these mines at the time of closure. Majority of the deposits are either converted or under conversion into open cast projects.

(d) to (g) : The opening and closure of the mines is an activity which is done in a careful and systematic manner. It is a continuous process in a coal mining industry.

Coal mining is site specific and passes through different phases of project life cycle as initial, peak and final. The mines get closed due to :

(i) Exhaustion of reserves;

(ii) Adverse geo-mining condition; and

(iii) Un-economical operation.

It is possible sometimes to reopen closed underground mines where reasonable amounts of coal are available in the form of barriers, partition thin seams, etc., and work with opencast methods.

To exploit the coal deposits in abandoned mines, CIL is now thinking of inviting Expression of Interest (EOI) for economic exploitation of such reserves. No collaboration of CIL/SCCL with foreign companies to exploit such coal deposits has been finalized so far.